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ANTHROPOLOGY 202 TERM PROJECT

THE BRILLIANT BRIDGE

By

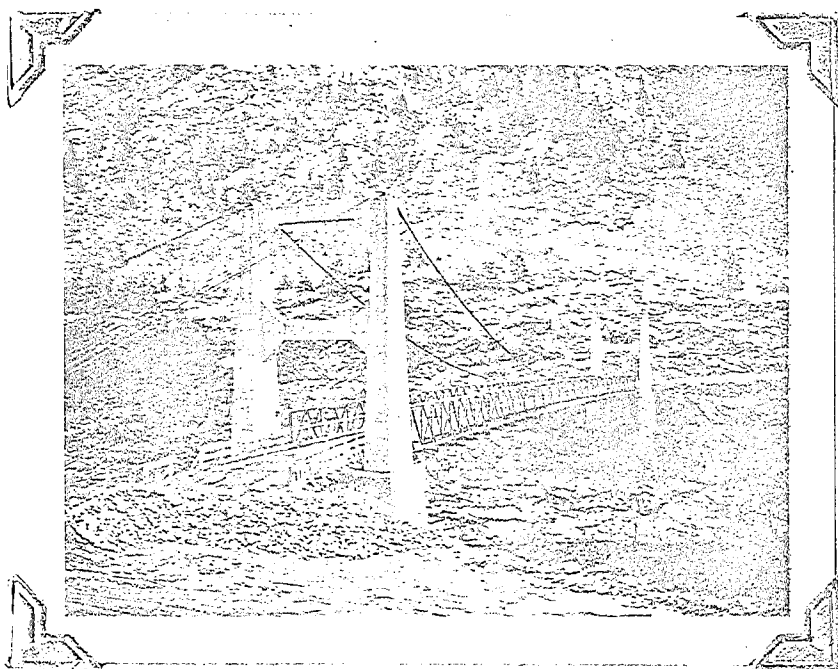
Cyril Ozeroff

For: Dr. Mark Healing

December, 1976

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THE BRILLIANT BRIDGE



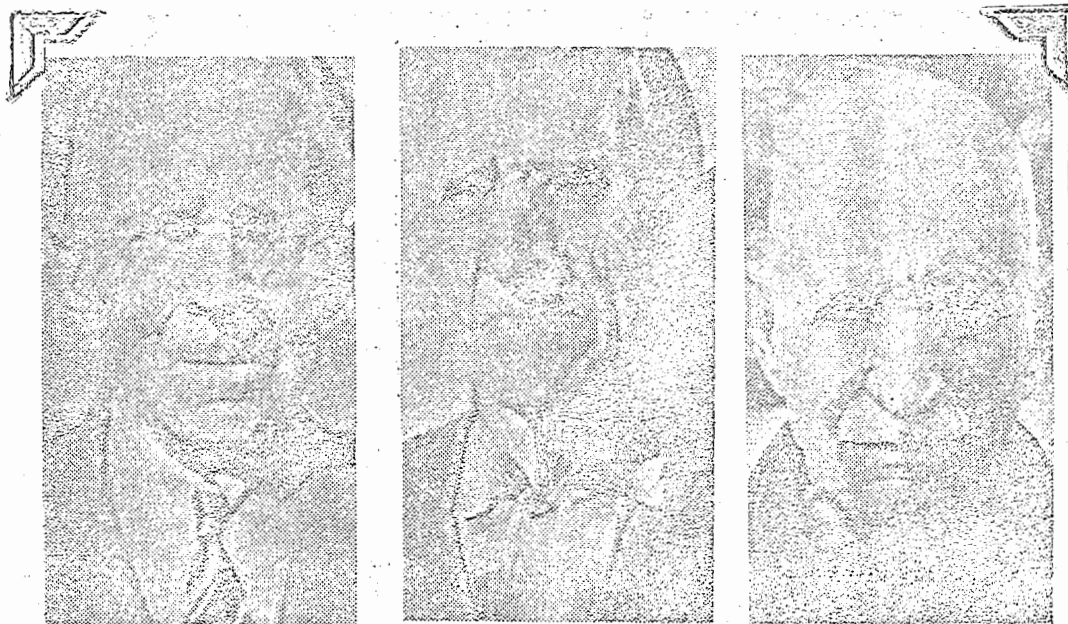
Recent Photographs



## INTRODUCTION

The historical Brilliant Bridge, which spans the Kootenay River near Brilliant, B.C., has always fascinated me. The project was completed in 1913, an undertaking of the members of the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood with the Government of British Columbia providing some financial aid. The many times I have walked or driven past or over this bridge, I could not help but wonder how this suspension bridge was built. My interest in the bridge was further helped by the fact that both my grandfathers worked on the construction of the bridge. It was this interest which helped me choose a research paper on the history of the Brilliant Bridge as a term project in Anthropology. And so began a long process of library research and personal interviews. It became evident very quickly that books on the Doukhobor people have greatly neglected the story of the bridge except for brief mention that it was built in 1913 and cost a certain amount of money. The writers had considered the bridge as just another Doukhobor project. After many futile hours of searching through many publications, I tried local newspapers of that time, such as the ROSSLAND MINER, TRAIL CREEK NEWS, and NELSON NEWS and came across some interesting accounts. Because information from printed material was limited, I went out into the field. I inquired in the Doukhobor community about people who may have worked on the project or had some

knowledge of it and are still alive today. Almost all people I talked to were children at the time of its construction and therefore recall very little. I was informed that there was one man, namely PETER A. REIBIN of Castlegar who worked on the project and remembers its construction well. Mr. Reibin was very happy to help me, and in a lengthy interview with him which I recorded on tape, he provided much historical and valuable information. His memory was very vivid: his recollections were so descriptive I was almost able to mentally go back sixty-three years in time and visualize the construction of the Brilliant Bridge. He is ninety years young today and was twenty-seven years of age when he worked on the bridge as a carpenter. My interview with him is included in full in this paper. I conducted the interview in Russian and did my best in translating the interview into English. I owe many thanks to Mr. Reibin for his contribution to my paper. I also owe thanks to WILLIAM M. ROZINKIN of Nelson who provided helpful pictorial and written information. Mr. Rozinkin wrote an article on the history of the Brilliant Bridge for Nelson Daily News which was published June 10, 1966. His article headlined: HISTORIC OLD BRILLIANT BRIDGE SOON TO DISAPPEAR --- HAD IMPORTANT ROLE IN HISTORY OF AREA. For his article, Mr. Rozinkin interviewed three men who worked on the bridge: PETER A. REIBIN, WILLIAM A. NAKHOTOFF, and my grandfather, FRED S. GEROFF. Of the three, only Mr. Reibin is alive today.



REIBIN

MAKORTOFF

OZEROFF

THREE OF THE SURVIVING WORKERS on the old Brilliant bridge are Peter A. Reibin, 79; William A. Makortoff, 78, and Fred J. Ozeroff, 85. Mr. Reibin and Mr. Makortoff worked as carpenters during the bridge construction in 1913. Mr. Ozeroff worked on the tower construction.

( William M. Rozinkin: 1966 )

I have made several visits to the old Brilliant Bridge during the writing of this paper, which have helped very much my understanding of the topic.

My paper begins with a brief outline of the Doukhobor experience on the Canadian Prairies, to provide some background as to why the Doukhobors found it necessary to move to British Columbia and establish their Community in this province. I also outline the establishment of the C.C.U.B. in B.C. until the time of the construction of the bridge. The remainder of the paper focuses on the Brilliant Bridge.

My paper was a very interesting Anthropology project, and I hope it will serve as a helpful reference to other Doukhobor youth who are interested in the accomplishments of their ancestors, the members of the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood.

DOUKHOBOR ARRIVAL IN CANADA  
SETTLEMENT IN SASKATCHEWAN

In 1899, 7,400 Doukhobors arrived in Canada from Russia where for many years they suffered from persecution because of their denouncement of militarism and unique religious beliefs. The Canadian government agreed to give every male Doukhobor above the age of eighteen 160 acres of land. In addition to land, an Order-in-Council of December 1898 granted the Doukhobors exemption from Canadian military service.

The Doukhobors settled in three colonies: (a) North Colony -- which was also called Thunder Hill Colony was about seventy miles from Yorkton, Saskatchewan, (b) South Colony -- with an annex called Devil's Lake Colony about thirty miles from Yorkton and (c) a third colony in the Saskatoon-Blaine Lake area. Within a few months after their arrival the Doukhobors settled in farm villages. They found themselves in a strange land without their leader, Peter V. Verigin (Lordly) who was still in exile in Russia.

When Peter Verigin arrived in Canada in 1902, he attempted to establish a communistic system that he had envisioned during his years of exile in Siberia.

"He centralized the business; purchased machinery, horses and leather, along with wheat, oats, and flour and himself became the business manager of the entire operation." (Tarasoff: 1969 p.30)

By 1907, the Doukhobors:

"... though illiterate, lacking in capital, and without experience in modern business and farming, were able to construct sizeable

communities containing brickworks, sawmills, flour mills and small factories. They also brought large areas of virgin soil under cultivation and helped in the expansion of the railroads."

(Davis, Krauter: 1971 p. 75 )

All signs seemed well for the Doukhobor Community in the early 1900's. They had through much communal effort established and organized themselves and experienced much success in their efforts. However, the latter part of the first decade of the 1900's proved to be a turning point in Doukhobor history.

The Doukhobor homesteads were registered in the name of the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood; they did not claim independent homesteads because of their aversion to oaths, which they believed may lead to commitment to military service. Saskatchewan became a province in 1905, and the pressure for Doukhobor lands increased by settlers and by government:

"Under the new Minister of the Interior, FRANK OLIVER, who was hostile to Doukhobors and to all Slavs, the government issued a new set of Homestead Regulations, ultimately aimed at forcing the Community Doukhobors to take out individual homesteads, through naturalization and other conditions."

(Tarasoff: 1969 p.30 )

"The following legal requirements caused the most difficulty. FIRST, while settlers could live communally if they wished, applications for homesteads had to be made by persons individually with a ten dollar fee accompanying each registration. SECOND, every homesteader was to take an Oath of Allegiance to the Canadian Government and to begin the process of becoming a naturalized

citizen. THIRD, the Doukhobor communities, though free from outside supervision were supposed to furnish the government voluntarily with registration data about the births, deaths and marriages of their members."

(Davis, Krauter 1971 p.76)

In 1906, the Department of the Interior decided:

- "(1) To maintain entries of all Independents cultivating their own homesteads and living on them or in a village within three miles of them.
- (2) To cancel all other Doukhobor entries.
- (3) To allow fifteen acres for each Doukhobor man, woman and child, who chose to remain within the communal system. In this allotment was included as much as possible of the cultivated land within three miles of the Doukhobor villages.
- (4) To hold all cancelled land for three months for exclusive Doukhobor re-entry, after which general entry would be granted.
- (5) Several minor provisions."

(Dawson: 1936 p.28)

These new government regulations created much opposition from the side of the Doukhobors, and especially their leader, Peter Verigin. Verigin's followers, which included the great majority of Doukhobors refused to become naturalized and thus forfeited the opportunity to become private owners of their Homesteads. They gave the following reasons:

- "(1) The Christian belief forbids one to take an oath.
- (2) The Earth was created by the Supreme Being and belongs to him alone. It is the property of mankind and therefore may be cultivated by everyone who cares to do so. It cannot be alienated or transferred from one man to another or from one government to another.
- (3) Persons who become naturalized would forfeit their right to exemption from



from military service as granted to Doukhobors  
by the Order-In-Council of December 6, 1898."  
(Tarasoff: 1969 p. 30)

Despite the pleading by Verigin and the Community  
Doukhobors, Frank Oliver, in 1907 gave the Doukhobors  
two months ultimatum to take the final Oath or failing this  
to be deprived of their land. The Community Doukhobors  
held firm, and therefore:

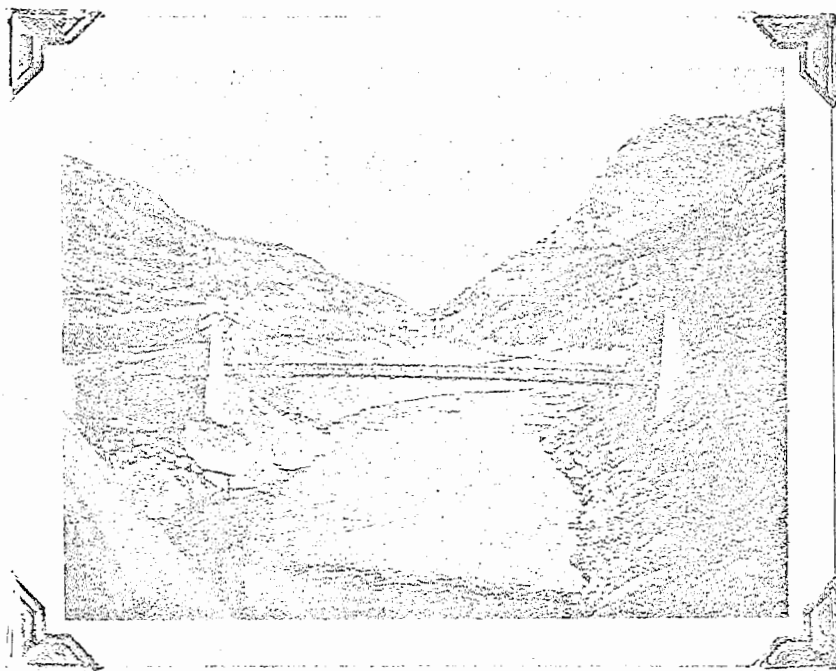
" Notwithstanding the pleading of Peter V.  
Verigin for time, eviction notices were  
given in June 1907 and over 256,800 acres  
of choice farm land, cleared, worked, and  
improved by the Doukhobors, reverted to  
the Government. There was an estimated loss  
to the Community of \$11 million."  
(Tarasoff: 1969 p. 31)

" 1,618 Homesteads, more than half of the  
land formerly reserved for Community  
members were made available to the  
general public." (Dawson: 1936 p. 28)

And so faded the dream of establishing a unique  
CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY OF UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD on the  
Canadian Prairies.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY OF  
UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD IN BRITISH COLUMBIA.

THE BRILLIANT BRIDGE



After the withdrawing of Doukhobor lands on the Prairies, the Doukhobors looked upon the Saskatchewan government with increasing mistrust, and Peter V. Verigin, leader of the C.C.U.B. Doukhobors, began to consider moving his people out of the province. The question of moving to a warmer climate which would make fruit and vegetable growing possible was raised. Investigations began by representatives of the Doukhobor people into possible settlement in other parts of North America. Passing through the Kootenay region of

British Columbia, Verigin was impressed by the area at the junction of the Kootenay and Columbia Rivers, near the old mining camp of Waterloo. After negotiations with Claude Laing Fisher, a land speculator in Nelson, Verigin decided to buy 2,800 acres of land at Waterloo. He also purchased 2,700 acres of land near Grand Forks. The purchase took place in 1908, and when Verigin returned to the prairies he told the people:

" In B.C. it is possible to grow fruits of nearly every kind -- apples, pears, plums, cherries, etc. Small fruits and vegetables grow wonderfully well. There is plenty of excellent timber for building purposes, and the air and waters are similar to Switzerland in nature and even much healthier.

(Woodcock, Avakumovic: 1968 p.225 )

In the spring of 1908, a party of 85 men, two men from each of the Saskatchewan Community villages, arrived at Waterloo. These men made cooperative efforts at clearing the land, which was all virgin forest, and building houses and they were joined by their wives and children the following year. A sawmill was constructed to process timber into building materials. A similar procedure was followed for the rest of British Columbia lands which were being purchased. Shortly after the first purchase of land in B.C., at Grand Forks the Doukhobor lands were named "Valley of the Fruit" and at Waterloo, because the name had military connotations, the name was changed to "Brilliant"

because of the "glitter of waters" of the joining rivers. By 1909 at Brilliant, the 700 settled Doukhobors made several miles of roads, two sawmills, several communal houses, stables, and outbuildings. Five hundred acres were cleared and planted with fruit trees and hillsides were terraced for vineyards. Planing machinery was added to the sawmills and furniture was being made. Also at this time, brick-works were established at Grand Forks. At 1910 the Doukhobors put a ferry into operation, linking Brilliant with Castlegar. Also in 1910, the Community bought the jam factory in Nelson from the Kootenay Preserving Company. The first mention of a bridge at Brilliant is found in an article in Trail Creek News, May 28, 1910:

" Altogether the Doukhobors have made about 12 miles of excellent road in and about their settlement. A promise has been made by the government of a financial return for this improvement, but no payment has yet been made. Surely such an industrious community is deserving of recognition, especially as, in forwarding their own interests they are advancing the welfare of the entire district. Another much desired convenience is a bridge at the Kootenay River. Here there is tremendous current, which gives the men fearfully hard work. As there is a vast amount of traffic at that spot, a bridge is a necessity, and the government should be exhorted to attend to the matter as soon as possible. "

By the autumn of 1912, there were more than 5,000 Doukhobors settled in British Columbia. The Community owned 14,403 acres which included land at Brilliant,

Grand Forks, Glade and Pass Creek at a cost of \$646,177.

A bridge at Brilliant is mentioned again in an article in Nelson News dated June 12, 1912:

" To provide transportation across the Kootenay River, a bridge is in the course of construction, high up on the bank, to allow vessels to pass under. From the nature of the stream, a long span was necessary, and will be affected by the novel method of suspension by eight steel cables. At present, a ferry driven by a horse and windlass carries passengers and freight across with ease."

Later in 1912, another article concerning the bridge appears in the Nelson News dated October 19, 1912:

" William Blakemore of Victoria, Doukhobor Commissioner, has been advised that the provincial government has agreed to make a grant of \$20,000 for the construction of the Doukhobor bridge at Brilliant, which will connect the settlement at that place with the trans-continental highway. When the road from two miles east of the city power plant has been built to Glade there will be a through route, via the bridge at Brilliant, along the south side of the Kootenay River from Nelson to Roseland and Trail."

In 1913, the year of the construction of the bridge, the Doukhobor settlements included Brilliant, Raspberry, Champion Creek, Glade, Shoresides, Cotischania, Pass Creek and Crescent Valley. Brilliant was the business center. An interesting account of the roads and bridges in the area in 1913 is found in an article in Trail Creek News dated July 12, 1913:

### GOOD ROADS IN DISTRICT

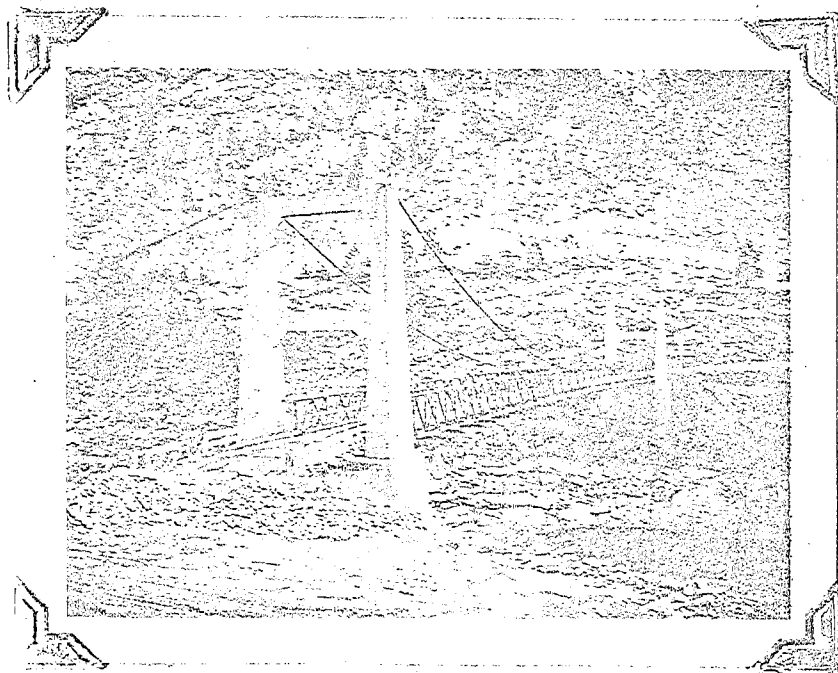
The trip from Trail to Castlegar, for the first time, can now be made comfortably by automobile in about an hour and a half. All that now remains to complete the road into Nelson is the improvement of the existing road between the mouth of Pass Creek and Crescent Valley, and the building of the Taghum bridge, tenders for the erection of which will be called for shortly. When all parts, now under construction or completed, are linked up, the route from Trail to Nelson will be as follows: Trail-Castlegar road to Waterloo; thence by ferry across the Columbia; thence through the Doukhobor settlement to Brilliant, where the Kootenay River is crossed by ferry ( a bridge is now under construction ) thence by road up Pass Creek, through Crescent Valley to Slocan Junction and Taghum, where the Kootenay River will be crossed by bridge; thence into Nelson, a total distance of approximately 44 miles, which under average conditions should be made by automobile in about three hours. "

Kozma Tarasoff, in his unpublished manuscript In Search of Brotherhood ( 1963 ) writes the following:

" Several miles of roads were put in around Brilliant and in 1913 a suspension bridge was constructed over Kootenay River joining Brilliant with Ootischenia settlements. The bridge cost \$60,000 of which \$20,000 was subsidized by the Provincial Government. This semi-public bridge had an inscription on the upper part ( Brilliant Side ) which read: "STRICTLY PROHIBITED SMOKING AND TRESPASSING WITH FIRE ARMS OVER THIS BRIDGE." ( Tarasoff: 1963 p. 388 )

Most writers agree with Tarasoff with regard to the cost of the bridge and the amount of government aid. For personal interest, I searched through the Sessional

Papers of the British Columbia Parliament to find the allotment of Government funds for the Brilliant Bridge. In the Public Works Report ( 1912-13 ) the sum of \$10,000.00 is entered for the Brilliant Bridge. In the Public Works Report ( 1913-14 ) \$9,500.00 is entered. I could not find the remaining \$500.00. It is possible that the \$20,000.00 of Government aid was the rough estimate quoted by the writers. ( Photo-copies of the Public Works Reports quoted above are found in the following pages.)



The old Brilliant Bridge today.

William Roziakin, in his article to Nelson Daily News of June 10, 1966 comments on the description of the Brilliant Bridge at the time of its construction:

" The old Brilliant Bridge was built in 1913, and was described as a modern structure of steel and concrete, an apt description when it is noted that a bicycle trip from Nelson to Balfour was considered newsworthy, that the Taghum Bridge was still in the planning stage, and that no high-way link between Thrums and Brilliant existed because the terrain was considered too rough. ... As many as 40 Doukhobors worked on the project, designed by J. R. Grant and under the supervision of A. M. Truesdale, both members of a Vancouver consulting firm. ... The bridge was built to join with 16-foot roadways cut through the solid rock of the adjoining mountains, and the roadbed is located 60 feet above high water mark. "

The suspension span is 331 feet in length. At each end of the bridge, concrete towers rise 48 feet above the road bed. The towers are approximately five feet by ten feet at the bottom and taper to two feet by four feet at the top. The tower legs are connected by cross-members also made of concrete. The towers sit on a massive base of concrete about 12 feet thick and 34 feet wide. Four two-inch diameter cables run the length of the bridge on each side, and at the top of the tower, pass over a saddle supported on rollers.

" The two-inch diameter cables were designed to distribute stress evenly along the support cables regardless of load location. "  
( Rozinkin: 1966 )

The end of each cable is fixed into a cast steel socket which is held by two two-inch diameter bolts. The cables are anchored by the bolts which are embedded in concrete-filled holes dug into solid rock. To limit side-to-side sway, four one-inch cables, two on each side of the bridge,



BRIDGES THROUGHOUT THE PROVINCE. (Vote 146—\$1,000,000)—*Con.**Yale District.*

Alexandra (old) .....	\$ 8 35
American Bar Creek .....	1,162 83
Armitage .....	6 00
Ashcroft .....	1,725 91
Chapman .....	524 90
Chamaux Road .....	290 33
Cleasby .....	190 50
Coldwater .....	100 78
Colletteville .....	1,515 62
Hunter Creek .....	578 60
Logan .....	334 06
Lytton .....	1,665 50
Marshall .....	16 30
Nicola (mouth of Nicola River) .....	3,680 40
Rocky Point .....	184 92
Spencer .....	147 95
Voght .....	169 75
Walhachin .....	249 90
Total .....	\$ 12,552 60

*Ymir District.*

Allendale .....	\$ 751 73
Anderson Creek .....	67 90
Arrow Creek (on Creston, Kitchener, Goatfield Road) .....	50 70
Arrow Park .....	97 75
Arrow Park (south) .....	1,466 57
Beaver Creek .....	1,678 78
Birchbrook .....	297 02
Blueberry Creek .....	75 50
x Brilliant .....	10,000 00
Carney (North Fork of Salmon River) .....	111 75
Columbia River at Trail .....	23,941 72
Crescent Valley .....	676 78
Duck Creek .....	2,569 95
Duck Creek-Kuskanook .....	369 75
Erie-Fruitvale Trunk Road .....	182 25
Erie River (North Fork of Salmon River) .....	73 25
Falls Creek .....	915 39
Floyd Creek (north beach) .....	845 02
Floyd Creek (south beach) .....	434 00
Fruitvale-Beaver Creek .....	104 86
Garritz Creek .....	1,147 96
Goat River .....	722 14
Grady Creek .....	458 95
Granite Road and connections .....	894 09
Hallett (Nelson-Balfour Road) .....	96 75
Inonoklin River .....	1,602 89
Kidd Creek .....	1,168 91
King Mine Road .....	1 75
Kochs .....	1,424 18
Kokanee Creek .....	71 37
Laid Creek .....	256 73
Manochlin River .....	222 15

Carried forward.....\$ 52,778 52

BRIDGES THROUGHOUT THE PROVINCE. (Vote 168—\$918,000.)—*Con.**Slocan District.*

Cariboo Creek.....	\$ 25 00
Carpenter.....	245 96
Carpenter (South Fork).....	13 00
Goat Canyon.....	770 07
Goat Creek.....	1,653 74
McCormack.....	110 25
McFadyen's.....	219 10
Perry's Siding.....	63 01
Silverton, Nos. 1-9, inclusive.....	38 75
Slocan River.....	110 25
Springer Creek.....	810 03
Three Forks.....	1,157 86
Tributary Creek.....	4 75
Wilson Creek.....	47 00
Wonderful-Queen Bess.....	181 00
General.....	207 00
Total.....	\$ 5,556 77

*Yale District.*

Ashcroft.....	\$ 1,003 85
Cemetery (Yale Road).....	287 10
Chapman.....	8 15
Coldwater Reserve.....	36 00
Cleasby.....	233 40
Colletville.....	318 80
Cornwall Road.....	37 30
89-Mile Post.....	33 00
Gordon Creek.....	1,360 45
Iron Mountain Road.....	30 00
Logan.....	8 15
Lytton Highway (old bridge).....	954 16
Lytton (new steel) (Thompson River).....	37,996 74
Nineteen-mile.....	14 00
Petit Creek.....	8 15
School Bridge (Yale-Hope Road).....	504 10
Seven-mile Creek (Lytton-Lillooet).....	736 90
Silver Creek.....	16 56
Spences (Thompson River on Trunk Road).....	977 37
23-Mile Post.....	158 25
West of Cemetery.....	87 75
Total.....	\$ 44,810 18

*Ymir District.*

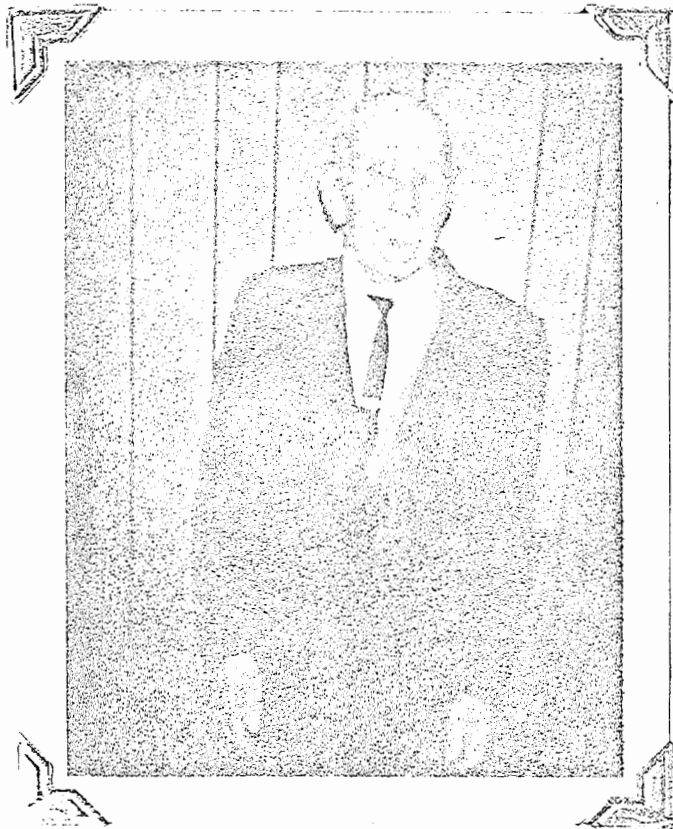
Arrow Park Road (local).....	\$ 118 50
Arrow Park (north).....	379 65
Arrow Park (south).....	42 50
Bird Creek.....	30 16
Brilliant.....	9,500 00
Bunker Hill.....	400 80
Canyon.....	2,070 08
Castlegar.....	517 81

Carried forward.....\$ 13,059 50

run from the middle of the bridge to opposite sides of the river where they are anchored into concrete high on the river bank.

The bridge deck was constructed of six-inch by fourteen-inch timbers placed on edge which served as stringers, running the length of the bridge across the steel frame. Six-inch by six-inch joists crossed the stringers and were placed approximately two feet apart. The flooring consisted of four-inch by ten-inch timbers laid lengthwise. The width of the bridge deck is approximately fourteen feet.

For a detailed account of HOW the bridge was built, I now refer the reader to my interview with Mr. Peter A. Reibin who recalled to the best of his ability the construction of the Brilliant Bridge sixty-three years ago.



Mr. Peter A. Reibin, 90,  
at time of interview

TRANSCRIPT OF CONVERSATION WITH PETER A. REIBIN  
REGARDING THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE BRILLIANT BRIDGE

December 12, 1976

MR. REIBIN, I AM A STUDENT OF SELKIRK COLLEGE AT CASTLEGAR. AMONG MY COURSES IS ANTHROPOLOGY --- WHICH IS GENERALLY THE STUDY OF MAN AND HIS CULTURE. I AM INTERESTED IN LOCAL HISTORY OF THE DOUKHOBORS AND HAVE CHOSEN AS A TERM PROJECT A PAPER ON THE HISTORY OF THE OLD BRILLIANT BRIDGE, ITS CONSTRUCTION AND ROLE IN THE AREA. I BELIEVE YOU WORKED ON THE BRIDGE DURING ITS CONSTRUCTION. IF YOU CAN RECALL ANY FIRST-HAND INFORMATION WITH REGARD TO ITS CONSTRUCTION, IT WOULD HELP ME VERY MUCH.

MR. REIBIN: I'll try my best to help you any way I can.

All the work at that time was by hand, there were no machines. We had a gasoline cement mixer for mixing cement and in cases of lifting something heavy such as cement a donkey engine was used for power.

HOW LONG DID IT TAKE TO BUILD THE BRIDGE?

MR. REIBIN: The construction was completed in seven months -- April, May, June, July, August, September, October. In October one was able to cross the bridge on foot, driving across was not yet allowed, to give time for the bridge to settle and strengthen.

WHAT WAS THE REASON FOR THE BUILDING OF THE BRIDGE -- WAS IT THAT THE COMMUNITY DOUKHOBORS WANTED AN ADEQUATE ACCESS FROM BRILLIANT TO COTISCHEMIA?

MR. REIBIN: Yes. At that time there was Brilliant, Pass Creek, Crescent Valley and Glade. Glade also needed an adequate access across the Kootenay

River, for although Glade was on this (Brilliant) side of the river, there was no road and automobiles could not get through .

WAS THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE BRIDGE THE SUGGESTION OF PETER VERIGIN (LORDLY) THE LEADER OF THE DOUKHOBORS AT THAT TIME?

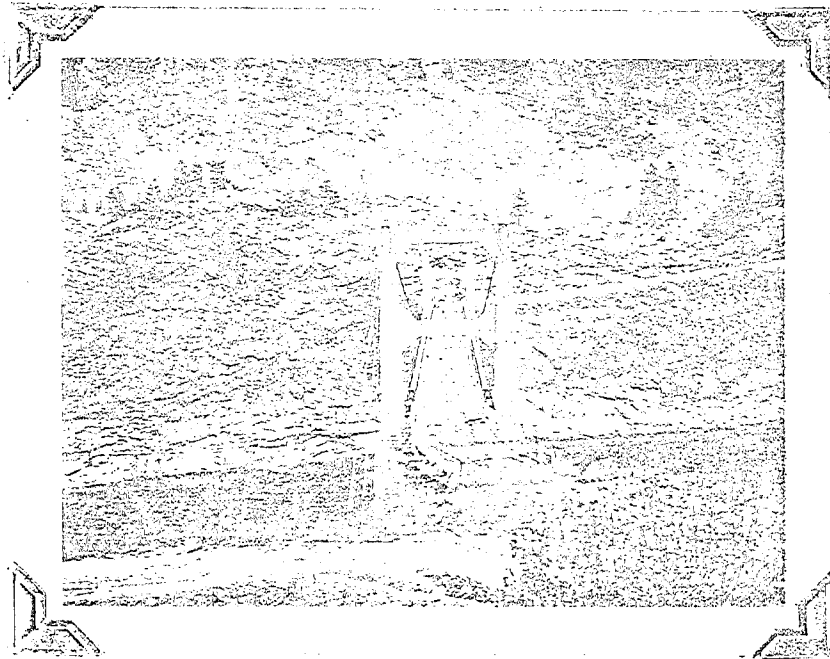
MR. REIBIN: Yes, he desired its construction. He and the Community wanted to build a bridge themselves, just below the present site of the bridge. You do not remember, but there was a ferry where the river began to widen. When the water was low, a rocky island was formed in the middle of the river. Upon Lordly's suggestion, during winter a triangular cribbing was erected. If the flood waters would not sweep the cribbing away, the Community would proceed with the construction of their bridge. But when the flood waters came, everything was swept away. In view of this, Peter Verigin made arrangements for engineers to come from Vancouver. After investigation, the engineers decided that at this spot it was too wide and to erect a bridge on cables would be quite involved and expensive. In addition, the beaches were too soft and this would mean the necessity of pouring cement deep down in the ground. They suggested building the bridge further up river where there was solid rock on both sides. And so it was decided. The engineers then measured everything out with their scopes, and ordered the bridge

and cables. The Community paid for everything. Preparation took about a year, and when everything arrived, the engineers sent their helper to supervise construction. He was quite young, maybe about 30 years of age and his task was not easy. The bridge arrived disassembled. Cables had to be cut, the bridge had to be assembled and everything must be fitted perfectly. It took skill to accomplish this but he was very capable. When the engineer arrived, he began measuring. It was interesting; we thought how would he measure? -- will he use tape or rulers -- no! -- he did all his figuring with a scope. He staked out where we were to begin and from there he would turn and write, turn and write. He determined everything in this manner. When he finished marking things out, we wondered -- will all the parts fit together? will there be enough material? -- but no, everything was determined perfectly.

#### HOW MANY MEN WORKED ON THE BRIDGE?

MR. REIBIN: Between 35 and 40 men; there were jobs like screening gravel, mixing cement and others. Most importantly, there were two parties of workers with four men in each who did the carpentry work; the building of forms for the concrete towers, laying of the bridge floor,

bridge assembly and other carpentry work. The towers were very high and scaffolding was necessary. On the Brilliant side, poles were erected and cement was hoisted by elevator to be poured into the tower forms. The power for the hoist was delivered by a donkey engine. On the Ootischenia side there was much less room. The engineer suggested to erect a large derrick with a boom and a bucket which held two wheelbarrows of cement. The boom would swing to the cement mixer and pick up the cement with the cables. It would then swing to the forms where those in charge of dumping would pull a lever and empty the cement into the forms. The bucket would then swing back for another load. In this method the towers were poured.



A View of the Towers From the Brilliant Side

THE MEN WHO WORKED ON THE BRIDGE -- WERE THEY FROM BRILLIANT AND OOTISCHENIA -- DID ANY WORKERS COME FROM OTHER DOUKHOBOY SETTLEMENTS?

MR. REIBIN: No, there were no workers from other settlements.

The Brilliant people only recently arrived to clear land. The area was forested when they arrived in spring. When they cleared some land they would erect homes and buildings. From Brilliant only two men worked regularly on the bridge. One looked after the gasoline cement mixer, Alex Reibin, the other man, I can't think of his name, worked on various jobs. The other workers on the bridge were mostly Community people from Ootischenia. If some workers would become ill or miss work for other reasons, Brilliant men would replace them until they returned.

Some workers were assigned to specific jobs; such as the carpenters, of which there was eight. Of this group, other than myself, there is only one man still alive today that I know of -- my friend Nick S. Trubetskoff of Saskatoon.

YOU WERE A CARPENTER ON THE BRIDGE?

MR. REIBIN: Yes, I was a carpenter and there were seven more. Four men worked on one side, and four worked on the other. When the tower forms were built up four feet or so, they would be poured, and then we would go higher.



When a lower section would set, we would take the boards and use them higher up. The towers tapered toward the top, so we would re-cut the boards to form the tower shape.

MY GRANDFATHER, FRED J. OZEROFF WORKED ON THE TOWER CONSTRUCTION

MR. REIBIN: Yes, your grandfather did many jobs such as working with cement, screening gravel and other jobs. He was not a carpenter. Some men worked digging four deep holes in the rock; two on the Brilliant side and two on the Ootischenia side. These holes were about eight feet deep and were made narrow at the top and widening toward the bottom. These holes were filled with cement into which were put two-inch diameter bolts to which the individual cables were fastened. The holes were shaped this way so that the cables would not pull the cement out of the ground. The bridge was anchored in the way. The carpenters, when finished their section of of the tower forms would help the engineer assemble the bridge parts at Brilliant. He would layout the cables on the ground and measure them for length after which we would cut them. The ends would be reversed, spliced, dipped into molten lead and inserted into cast steel sockets. The engineer also decided that the bridge

should be arched. On the ground, we re-adjusted the bridge segments to form the arch shape.

It was necessary to re-drill some holes for bolts and make other adjustments. We bolted the segments together on the ground to see if everything fit properly. When the cables were in place at the river, the bridge segments were moved to the river for final assembly.

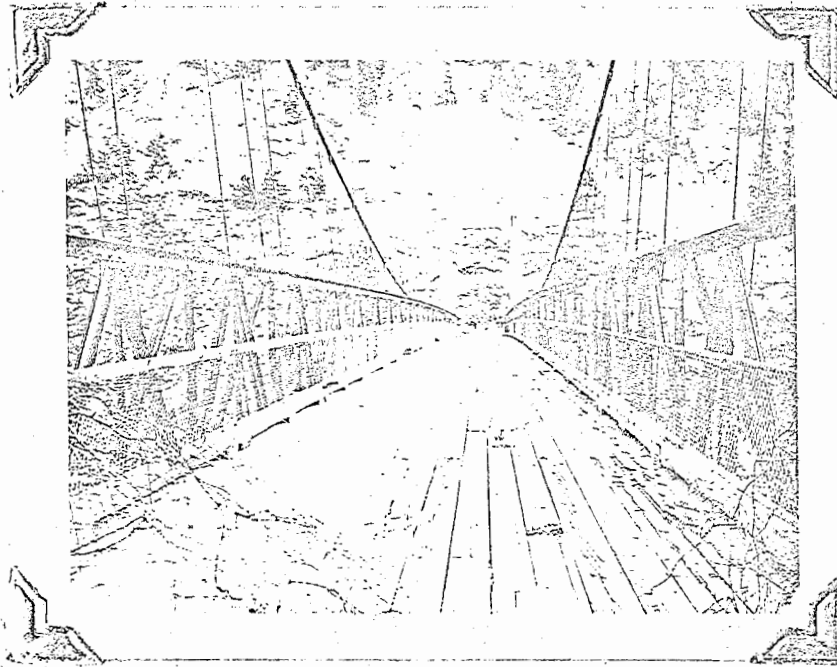
A cable was strung a little higher than the others and four men, two on each side and end of the bridge, sitting in small seats which were fastened to the cable, hooked rods first to the large cables and then to the bridge frame.

This was one of the more dangerous jobs.

After the rods were fastened, rails were bolted to the steel cross beams. After three or so cross beams were in place we would proceed with the bridge deck; stringers, joists, and flooring. We worked from both ends of the bridge in sections until both sides came together.

DID ANY COMMUNITY MEMBERS RECEIVE ANY WAGES FOR THEIR WORK ON THE BRIDGE?

MR. REIBIN: No, there were no wages. It was a Community project.



Recent Picture Taken While Standing on the Bridge  
Which Shows the Cables, Rods, Rails, Flooring.

HOW MANY HOURS PER DAY DID THE MEN WORK?

MR. REIBIN: We began at 7:00 a.m. and ended at 6:00 p.m. --  
Eleven hours per day.

THEY WERE LONG HOURS; TODAY ONE FEELS TIRED AFTER WORKING EIGHT HOURS

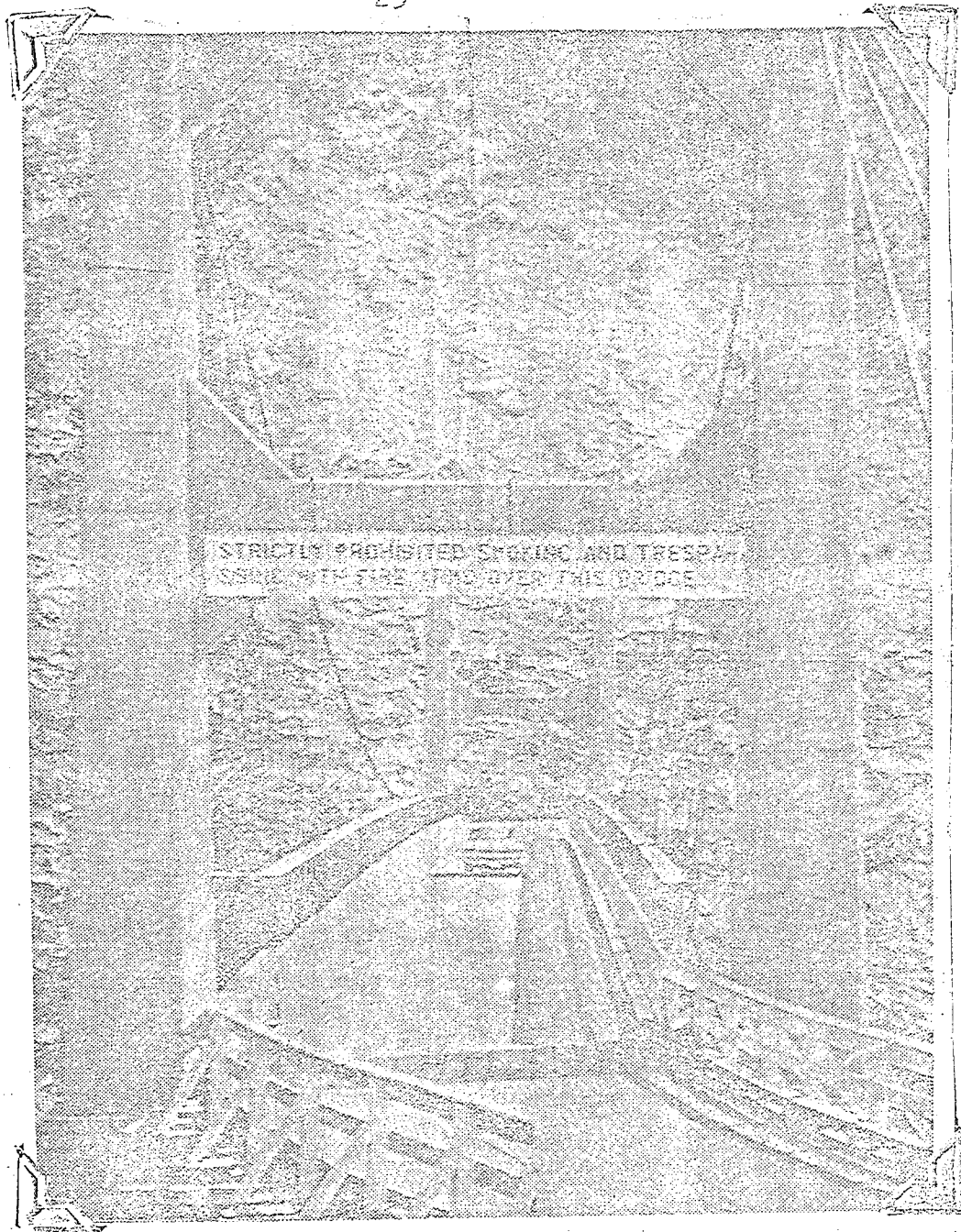
MR. REIBIN: Yes, they were long but that is how work in  
the Community was done. Today, the machines  
push the worker; one has to work quickly and  
hard, but at that time, and I was involved in  
quite a few enterprises after the bridge:  
building construction, construction of Community  
sawmills, planer mills and others, work was  
quiet and a person managed quite easily at his  
job although the hours were long.

MY OTHER GRANDFATHER, PETER A. CSACHOFF ALSO WORKED ON THE BRIDGE. DID YOU KNOW HIM AND WHAT SORTS OF JOBS DID HE DO?

MR. REIBIN: Yes, I knew Peter Csachoff. He worked on various jobs, he was not a carpenter. He could have worked with the drillers, which was quite a heavy job.

WERE THERE ANY SERIOUS ACCIDENTS OR INJURIES ON THE BRIDGE DURING ITS CONSTRUCTION?

MR. REIBIN: No. There were cases of people getting hurt while clearing land or other jobs, but on the bridge we had no accidents; we worked carefully and cautiously. The job was completed safely, no one fell or hurt himself. We were concerned that during the fastening of cables above the river someone may break off or slip off. We thought at one time that perhaps rubber-soled boots should be worn to prevent slippage. The engineer said no, that we would fall easier if we wear rubber soles which also may stick to hot steel. The best footwear, he said, is plain leather boots with thin soles and low heels. Leather soles, he said, are better than rubber for wood and steel. The Community had its own cobbler, and he said if we would be having some boots worn for us, he also wanted a pair.



AN INTERESTING FEATURE of the old Brilliant Bridge is the sign that is hung over the Brilliant approach. It was installed by the Doukhobors after the bridge was completed, and is based on their religious principles. It is probably as widely known as the bridge itself.

( Photograph and Caption -- William M. Rozinkin: 1966 )

WHEN WAS THE SIGN ERECTED ON THE BRIDGE WHICH SAID: "STRICTLY PROHIBITED SMOKING AND TRESPASSING WITH FIREARMS OVER THIS BRIDGE?"

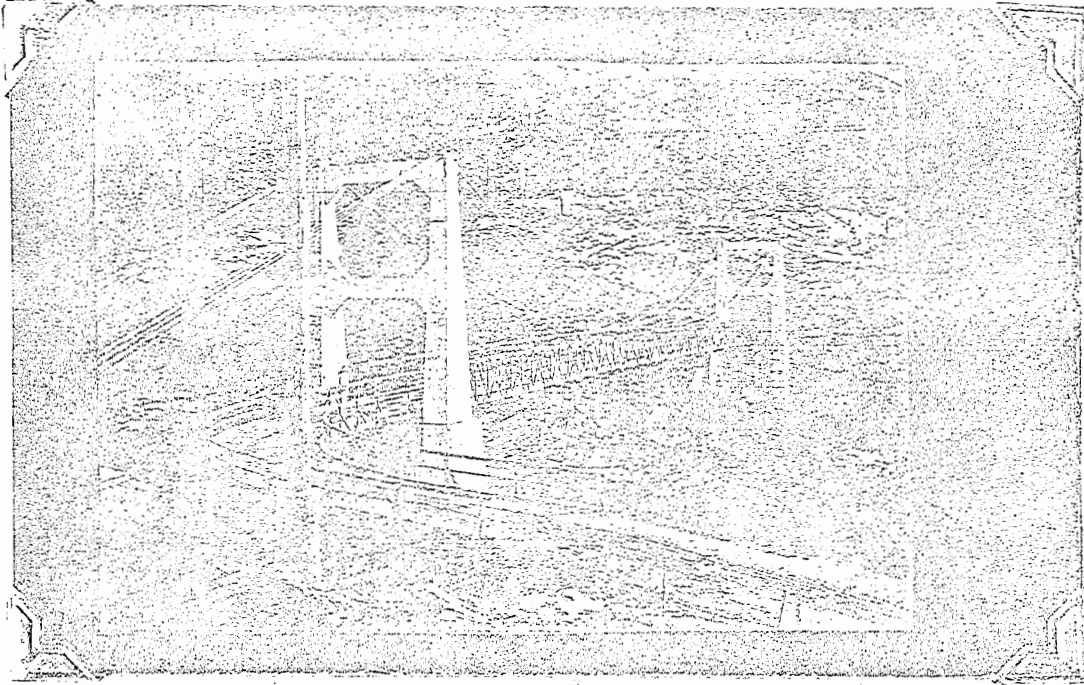
MR. REIBIN: The sign was erected after the bridge opened, perhaps half a year or so after it was completed. It stated that the Community did not wish to see hunters or other people having firearms cross the bridge.

DO YOU REMEMBER THE OPENING OF THE BRIDGE: HOW DID IT TAKE PLACE?

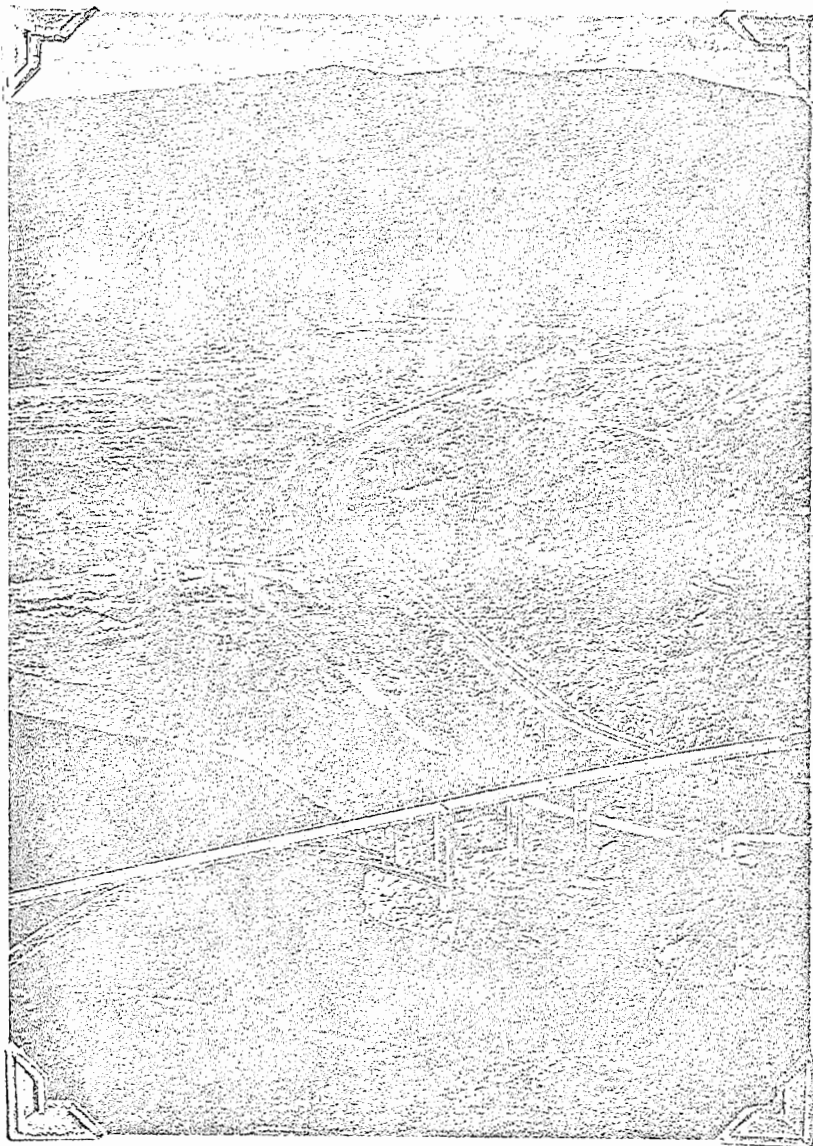
MR. REIBIN: Yes, the opening took place as follows. The Brilliant men were, prior to the completion of the bridge, clearing land and establishing homes and buildings at Brilliant. Their families were to join them when the preparatory work was completed. The families arrived in October; the bridge was not quite ready when they arrived, so the Coticshenia people crossed the river by ferry to meet the new settlers. A few days after their arrival it was Sunday and the Brilliant people were in Coticshenia where a large meeting was held in the Coticshenia Prayer Home. I am not sure of the exact date, it was near the end of October. Peter Lordly Verigin decided that it was possible to officially open the bridge. The crowd walked across the bridge in groups -- some were concerned that the bridge may collapse if everyone stepped onto it at once.

MR. REIBIN: It was a long time ago, sixty-three years.

YES IT WAS. MR. REIBIN, THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR TAKING THE TIME TO PROVIDE MUCH INTERESTING INFORMATION ON A FAMOUS DOUKHOBOR PROJECT, THE BRILLIANT BRIDGE. I WISH YOU MANY MORE YEARS OF HEALTH AND HAPPINESS.



A Post Card - Photograph of the Brilliant Bridge taken not long after the Opening of the Project.



Post Card - Photograph showing the modern and the old hand-built Brilliant Bridges across the Kootenay River. The original suspension bridge was constructed in 1913 and was replaced by the new concrete structure in 1966.



## CONCLUSION

The historic Brilliant Bridge served an important role in the local area. Hand-built in 1913 by the Community Doukhobors, its original purpose was to link the Doukhobor settlements of Ootischenia and Champion Creek ( Blagodatnoe ) to Brilliant, where the headquarters of the " Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood" under the leadership of Peter V. Verigin ( Lordly ) were located. The bridge served the non-Doukhobor public as well, and for many years, carried traffic to the Castlegar Airport which is located at Ootischenia.

In 1966 the new Brilliant Bridge was constructed and after 53 years of service, the old Brilliant Bridge was retired from public use. Today this suspension bridge still proudly spans the Kootenay River and brings back many fond memories to those who can recall its construction and role in the area. Recently a long-play record album was released entitled " The Bridge of Friendship. "

An explanation for the title is found on the back cover:

" As a young girl, Tina Popoff walked over the Brilliant Bridge many times to participate in her favorite pastime -- singing at the " Sobranya . " For the young Doukhobor, a hymn or folksong would always satisfy her inner soul... The Brilliant Bridge is symbolic to Tina and her singing neighbors, of the desire to be friends with everybody. This bridge originally united two communities. The Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood and the outside world of non-communal members. With all, Tina and her companions wished to be friends, thus she selected the title " The Bridge of Friendship. "

The album jacket contains two interesting photographs. On the front cover is a large picture of the old Brilliant Bridge as it looks today, and on the back cover is a photograph of the Bridge Opening Day, October, 1913 and a brief write-up of its history.

The Brilliant Doukhobor Bridge is a majestic symbol of the efforts of a group of pioneers who left their Russian homeland prior to the turn of the century and entered a young, growing country. Having hope, faith, and optimism -- living according to their slogan "Toil and Peaceful Life" they faced many challenges and emerged successfully, leaving many contributions to the character of Canada.

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